

SAMARITAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

OUR STORY TOO

LESSON 5, DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

In the last lesson (4) you observed that Christianity at any given time and place is a defined community with a set of beliefs and ceremonies. Now in Lesson 5, you will see that Christianity at any given time and place is a community changing its thoughts and practices to grapple with new situations. The reading assignment for this fifth lesson is pages 90 - 119 of Frankiel's book *Christianity*. Read these pages all the way through. Then go through them again, section by section, and answer the study questions in the space provided.

Then make a clear photocopy of your study question pages with your responses, or type your responses on separate sheets of paper. Send this second copy of your responses back for grading to the Samaritan faculty member who coordinates correspondence courses. The address is on the cover letter.

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(A) PILGRIMAGE: TWELFTH CENTURY EUROPE
Christianity, Chapter 4, pages 90-103

- (1) Undertaking a pilgrimage or journey to visit a holy place has been a common practice in Christianity for most of its 2000 years. Some of the perceived purposes in making a pilgrimage have been:
- (a) to _____
 - (b) to _____
 - (c) to _____
- (2) Why would the very effort of leaving home and going on a pilgrimage instigate changes in one's personal life?
- (3) Whereas many pilgrims in the first 1000 years of Christianity would go to holy sites to seek a special closeness to God and to pray, others had pilgrimages imposed upon them as a penance for scandalous sins. Why did this penance motive for making a pilgrimage grow more important in the first few hundred years of the second millenium of Christianity?

(a) Many Christians believed that...

(b) The increasing importance of the doctrine and practice of...

Thus pilgrimage moved from the periphery of Christian devotion to near the center as the Christians of Europe became more concerned about _____.

- (4) Read the description of "The Route of the Pilgrim" on pages 93 - 99. Although this journey probably sounds strange and foreign to you, try to enter into the mindset of a 12th century pilgrim. Imagine leaving everything that is familiar and dear to you at home and setting out on a journey on foot. You will be going further away from home than you have ever been and will see many wondrous and sacred items and places you have only heard about. Imagine your excitement and joy at the prospect of being purified of your sins, healed of ailments, and feeling much closer to God.

Choose one part of the pilgrimage and in a one-paragraph essay describe your feelings and thoughts as a 12th century pilgrim.



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- (5) On pages 100-103 Frankiel points out how the Compostela (Saint James) pilgrimage is a good example of an ancient and familiar ritual adapted to meet the needs of that time and place. In a one-page essay explain how the Saint James legends and pilgrimage were used not only for devotional and purification purposes but also for social, political, and ecclesiastical reasons.

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(B) CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY: NINETEENTH CENTURY U.S.A.
Christianity, Chapter 4, pages 103-119

- (1) Frankiel presents brief biographies of Lyman Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe. In so doing she explains a dramatic shift in one generation in the 1800's in both Christian thought and church-state relations.

The New England Puritanism that formed Lyman Beecher and which he espoused was not what is often called "puritanical", that is prudish about _____.
"Puritanism" did mean having _____.
_____. In Puritan society the church was at the _____ and thus _____.
Church attendance was viewed as _____
and as _____.

- (2) In a one-paragraph essay describe the Puritan conversion process.

- (3) What was the relationship of church and state in Connecticut and Massachusetts in 1812? What happened in 1818 to change this?

- (4) Lyman Beecher was at first dismayed by this 1818 change in Connecticut (#3), but he soon saw it as good thing. Why?

- (5) How did the separation of church and state and the development of voluntary associations pressure American Christian thought/theology to change?

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- (6) Although Lyman Beecher did not shy away from theological debate and was attacked for being too conservative and too liberal, his real passion was for the moral state of American society. Why was he so concerned about the expanding West in this regard?

Why did he move to Cincinnati?

- (7) In a one-paragraph essay explain why Lyman Beecher viewed the church, the ministry, and the seminary as absolutely central and crucial to the health of American civilization.

- (8) What was untraditional about Harriet Beecher's faith/conversion experience?

- (9) The social-political-moral issue in which Harriet Beecher Stowe got involved in her writing was _____.
Her well-known novel on this subject was _____.

- (10) In a one-paragraph essay describe Harriet Beecher Stowe's vision of society. In what sense was this vision "feminine"?

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- (11) Why did Harriet Beecher Stowe join the Episcopal Church at the age of 53? Explain in a one-paragraph response.

- (12) The year 1850 marked a crucial shift in American religion from the era of Calvinist tradition to the era of evangelical piety. The two generations reflected by Lyman Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe demonstrate this redefinition of religion. The two generations shared an emphasis on moral character but viewed it quite differently.

Lyman Beecher saw character as...

Harriet Beecher Stowe saw character as...

Lyman Beecher urged his fellow Americans to preserve religion as the _____. For him the moral character of the nation would be ensured by preserving _____.

For Harriet Beecher Stowe the moral character of the nation would be preserved by _____. The pivot of her religion was _____.

Puritanism had depended on a stable society. Such stability was altered by the Industrial Revolution and westward migration. This made the home and family relationships more important for providing stability and morality. In Harriet Beecher Stowe's writings morality meant _____, _____, and _____.

- (13) Nineteenth century U.S.A. experienced bursts of new freedom in throwing off old institutions that had become burdensome, expanding into new territory, and experimenting with new ways of life (much like the second half of the twentieth century). In a one-paragraph essay explain the dangers in this sense of freedom and the remedy that Harriet Beecher Stowe presented.

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- (14) For this final question you have two options. Write a one-page essay on either one of the following.
- (a) How the Christian churches in your cultural setting are responding to present-day desires and urges which are viewed as problematic by church and/or society
 - (b) How Christians of other times and places would respond to MCC congregations

